

# THE EPISTLE OF VICTORY

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF  
GURU GOBIND SINGH's ZAFARNAMA  
IN VERSE

By  
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Hukam Singh Road, Amritsar.

*Fareword by*  
Mr. S. F. DEANE  
P.E.S. (Retd), M.L.C.  
Ambala.

TO BE HAD FROM ALL BOOK-SELLERS  
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By the same Author :—

The Psalm of Life—Japji—English Verse

The Dawn of Hope-Gita 2 Ch, ,,

Welcome holy relics, welcome home, ,,

Chandigarh, ,,

The Saga of Salvation-Sukhmani, ,,

## THE EPISTLE OF VICTORY

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### Dedication

To men, women and children who live and die so that others may live in peace and prosperity, this humble work is respectfully dedicated.

The Author

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## FOREWORD

I congratulate S. Gursharn Singh Bedi, F.A., L.L.B., on his excellent translation of Zafarnama from Persian into English verse. The Zafarnama is a challenge of the prophet-patriot, saint soldier, and unique scholar Guru Gobind Singh to the powerful Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. In it the Guru advises the great Mughal with a spirit of boldness and courage to cease hostilities against those who did not profess his religion. The Zafarnama also has, therefore, a permanent message for the rulers as to how they should behave towards those over whom destiny has called upon them to rule. In fact the message is for every one who aspires to lead a pious and self-sacrificing life.

The Zafarnama shows the highest qualities of head and heart which the Guru possessed and is also steeped with spiritual sentiments of high order which can serve as a load-stone to the seekers after truth.

6'

I feel delighted to own that the reading of the translation of the Zafarnama gave me intense pleasure and joy. I hope that all those who will have the opportunity of perusing it will feel indebted to Mr. Bedi for having translated it so faithfully and in such a forcible language.

S. F. Deane

P.E.S. (Rtd), M.L.C.

Ambala

6. 11. 1959



## PREFACE

In every age saviours are born  
To save the fallen and forlorn.

Sahib Guru Gobind Singh is known more as a man of action than as a man of letters. It is due to the failure of his followers to give requisite publicity to his great literary works. While chalking out a programme for the uplift of the fallen Indian Nation the Guru kept in view that besides mass mobilization he had to produce literature which could warm up the centuries old cold-blood of enslaved India. His court was adorned by 52 poets and scholars of repute. With their cooperation he used to hold big poetic symposia where people listened to the inspiring poems of select poets of the time. Pandits famous for their learning were employed to translate important sanskrit works into Hindi and also teach that language to the Sikhs. Some scholars under the leadership of Pandit Raghunath refused to impart



instruction to the Sikhs as there were men of low caste among them and according to the Shastras teaching of Sanskrit to the Shudras was forbidden. The Guru dismissed this group forthwith and sent his five disciples Bhai Karam Singh, Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Ganda Singh, Bhai Saina Singh and Bhai Ram Singh to Benares for the purpose. They returned after seven years fully qualified in the ancient lore of Brahmnrishi-desha. Under the honoured title of Nirmalas (the pure) they imparted the light of learning to many Sikhs. The Sikh scholars then translated into chaste Hindi the Maha-Bharta, Ramayana, Upnishidas etc etc. In his 42 years of turbulent life spent mostly in fighting the Guru found time enough to study Sanskrit, Hindi, Persian and Punjabi. In the last three languages he could write with equal facility. He was a gifted scholar and a poet. Draped in the classical tunes of old his poetry is rich in metaphors abounding in beauties of sound and brimming with poetic niceties of diction and thought still unsurpassed. All his available

writings are preserved in the Dasm Granth which was compiled by a contemporary scholar Bhai Mani Singh. They are as under :—

1.	Jap	. . .	199 verses	
2.	Akal Ustat	...	271 $\frac{1}{2}$	„
3.	Vachitter Natak	...	271	„
4.	Chandi Chritter	...		
	(a) First Version	...	233	„
	(b) Second Version	...	262	„
5.	Avtars of Vishnu	...	4370	„
6.	Mir Mehdi	...	10	„
7.	Up-Avtar	...	1201	„
8.	Shabadas	...	9	„
9.	Sawayyas	...	32	„
10.	Shaster Nam Mala	...	1318	„
11.	War Siri Bhagawati ji ki		55	„
12.	Gian Parbodh	...	336	„
13.	Zafarnama	...	111	„
14.	Hakayats	...	756	„
15.	Charit Pakhian	...	7569	„
16.	Miscellaneous Verses	...	59	„
Total			17262 $\frac{1}{2}$	„



After the battle of Chamkore travelling by short stages and awakening the people from long stupor of slavish living the Guru reached village Dina in Ferozepur district where he was welcomed by his devotees Shamira, Lakhmira and Takhtmal. It was there that the third letter of Emperor Auragzeb Alamgir inviting the Guru to his court was received. Two had already been received at Anandpur. The Guru well remembered the fate of his father Guru Teg Bahadur. He also knew how the Emperor had waded through the blood of his brothers to the royal throne. Past experience in the battles against Imperial armies had also confirmed that the Emperor was not a man to be trusted. He, therefore, refused to accept the invitation and sent a written reply to the Emperor known as Zafarnama—the Epistle of victory.

The Zafarnama letter of the Guru consists of III cauplets in Persian verse and is one of the most forceful epistles ever written in that language. Written in the



style and metre of Firdosi's Shahnama it begins with an invocation to Lord God. Thereafter the whole letter reads like a rebuke from a superior to one in an inferior position.

The Guru in this letter tells the Emperor that he had proved to be a liar. He knows no religion and was utterly blind to truth. He feared neither God nor followed the Prophet's way. Not only he but also his ministers of church and state told lies again and again. The Hill Rajputs who worshipped the idols had also thrown to winds their swearings by the Cow. After getting vacated the fortress of Anandpur on false representations and oaths the imperial troops and hill Rajputs attacked him near the Sirsa stream which was most mean on their part.

In verses 21, 22 and 23 of the Zafar-nama letter the Guru expresses a feeling of regret for his having been compelled to take up arms and to be a party to bloodshed : -

With much reluctance I did yield  
 For battle to step into the field,  
 And weapons like a bow and arrow  
 In that bloody struggle to wield.

When all efforts to restore peace  
 Prove useless and no words avail,  
 Lawful is the flash of steel then  
 And right it is the sword to hail.

Thou thyself say of what avail  
 Were all this bloodshed to me,  
 An outcome of all pledges false  
 On the holy Qoran sworn by thee.

Describing the battle of Chamkore the  
 Guru says that his forty femished comrades  
 fought with undaunted courage against the  
 Emperor's men who fell upon them like a  
 locust swarm raising bitter shouts and  
 cries. There was tremendous loss of life  
 and the battle field turned red with the  
 blood of the wounded and slain. Many  
 Afghans with a boastful tongue took to  
 their heels from the scene of that grim strife.  
 At last the sun went down and moon the



Queen of nights went up the sky in full glory. The Guru then came out of the redoubt, killed two enemy watchmen with his goldtipped arrows and made good his escape through the bloodthirsty enemy forces shouting, "Here goes Pir-a-Hind, here goes Pir-a-Hind".

Lord God the chastiser of proud arms  
 Rescued me safe from the cunning foes  
 No harm was done,, not a hair was hurt,  
 For grace divine full security bestows

Recalling the martyrdom of his four sons the Guru tells the Emperor that even this was of no avail to him because the Khalsa spirit was immortal and the sacrifice of the innocent Princes had drawn thousands more under his banner to destroy root and branch the tyrant's rule. It was no use putting out a few flames while a blazing fire was still raging to reduce to ashes the Imperial edifice built with cunning and cruelty.



Tho' the voice of my belov'd sons  
 Thou hast O King for ev'r stilled,  
 Of what avail is this cruel deed  
 When I breathe alive fury filled.

It was high time that the Emperor  
 should relinquish his savage regime the cup  
 of his life beigng full to the brim with the  
 sins he had done.

Do thou honour, O sovereign King,  
 The purpose right and wisdom true,  
 And to cruel deal with fellow men  
 Must, O Mughal lord, now bid adieu.

Thy crafty nature is full well known  
 To God almighty our heavenly Sire,  
 Who wiil now no longer thee suffer  
 To hold away over this great Empire.

If the Emperor was anxious to see him  
 and bring the longdrawn agony to an end,  
 he (the Emperor) should come forth with  
 a clean heart and issue a royal Firman ceas-  
 ing all hostilities against the sikhs and then

alone a meeting could be arranged. The veil of ignorance will then be rent assunder and truth will be clear to all. The Emperor should no longer torture fellow beings nor be misled by false reports and should also know for certain that his misdeeds would not go unpunished :—

O, commit not the sin of homicide  
 Forgetful of the Lord's wrath divine,  
 For soon or late thy blood be shed  
 By the unfailing sword of Lord benign.

This done the onward march was again resumed with a large following. Near Khidrana, now Muktsar, district Ferozepore, an encounter with the Mughal armies became unavoidable. Forty mahja peasants who had deserted the Guru at Anandpur and in their own turn had been disowned by their women-folk for the despicable deed they had done, also joined the Guru in that battle. They fought with rare courage and fell to a man. The Mughal forces were routed and the enemy took to their heels



leaving their dead and wounded uncared for. After the battle the guru came across mother Bhago, the nurse of Prince Zorawar Singh, lying wounded. She narrated to the Guru how the forty deserters had repented for the sin of disowning him and had sacrificed their lives for his sake. The Guru went round the dead and dying, recognised his disciples one by one and kissed and blessed them as his beloved sons. While he was thus engaged his eyes fell upon Bhai Mahan Singh who had a few breaths in him. On beholding the Guru Mahan Singh's delight knew no bounds. He, however, could only utter these words, "futi Gandho-restore the snapped relationship." The Guru with great pleasure took out the bedawa (disowning deed) from his own pocket and tore it to pieces. With folded hands and a smile on his lips Bhai Mahan Singh breathed his last in the lap of the Guru.

The blood of martyres feeds the ground  
So that in truth and glory it may abound.



In the meanwhile after a long and tedious journey Bhai Daya Singh and Bhai Dharam Singh to whom the letter Zaffar-nama was entrusted by the Guru reached Ahmad Nagar in the Deccan and handed it over to Emperor Aurangzeb, who was lying ill there, with the salutation, "Wahiguru ji ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru ji ki Fateh". The Emperor was deeply impressed by the contents thereof and repented for the inhuman deeds committed by him and his lieutenants in his name. A royal Firman was forthwith issued and war against the Khalsa came to an end. The governors of Lahore and Sirhind were severely reprimanded for the atrocities committed by them and were directed thus, "Molest the Guru no more, bring him to the royal court with respect due to his exalted position in life and defray all expenses of his journey from the State treasury". The bearers of this letter were also furnished with a writ of safe conduct on their return journey.

Truth triumphed at last. The Guru

was now free to move and preach his religion in every corner of India. In October 1706 A. D. he started towards the Deccan perhaps with a view to meet the Emperor but he was at Bhagaur in Rajputana when he heard the news of the Emperor's death at Ahmad Nagar in February 1707 A. D. The Guru had rightly predicted in the Zafar-nama that :—

Thy crafty nature is full well known  
 To God almighty our heavenly Sire,  
 Who will now no longer thee suffer  
 To hold sway over this great Empire.

In the following pages I offer a translation in English verse of this sublime piece of poetry. Every word of it reflects the master's erudite learning, dauntless courage, truthful spirit and selfless sympathy for fellow beings without distinction of caste, creed and colour. He was the brother of the untouchable and the outcaste, of the lonely and the lost. He saw the sufferings of the poor, the greed of the rich, the selfish-



ness of the mighty, the cruelty of the tyrant and realized that life is a field for service and sacrifice for common good. In a spirit of self dedication he fought fearlessly and sacrificed his all to establish peace on earth and good-will among men of different religious beliefs. Like a meteor the Guru consumed himself to illumine the universe by word, deed and example. Shew me a man in the history of the world in such a difficult position and with such a splendid record as Guru Gobind Singh a saint, scholar, philosopher, soldier, statesman and saviour the like of whom may not come again !

Why O critic thou findest not delight  
 In the deeds of the hero of freedom fight,  
 Why by words vain you blacken your face,  
 Why say aught for which there is no place,  
 The habit of slander is woeful and base,  
 To God's people it can bring no solace,  
 Misguided thyself pretending to be wise  
 You hide your shame behind bitter lies,  
 O behave not in that most execrable way,  
 It must doom you full on the judgment day !



The long cherished dream of Indian independence has at last been realised. Twelve years ago India was declared a sovereign Republic, but our boat is still in the midstream. The shore of safety is far away and the glow of freedom has not yet touched India's ill-fed and ill-clad millions. Tears trickle down my eyes when I find our people fighting among themselves over petty matters and for selfish ends instead of marching on in a brotherly spirit to defend their hard won freedom. Such quarrels make us weak and retard our progress in all walks of life. We should try to settle our differences by peaceful arbitration and friendly discussions based on the golden principles of 'Live and let live' and "Give and take".

Strive hard for world peace. Spread rays of love from your heart. Hate tyranny, injustice and falsehood. Let "liberty, freedom, equality and democracy" be your watch-words. Live up to the ideals expressed in the Zafarnama and the following two

21

poems; macrh on in their light; you will  
change; your days will change; fortune will  
smile on you and your motherland will once  
again be a precious gem in the crown of  
humanity.

My worshipful master art Thou  
To whom my homage is ev'r due,  
All beings each and ev'ry place,  
Are thine, O Lord, Thine always,  
Father Thou art dear mother too,  
And we all children unto you,  
In Thine mercy and pleasure  
Of comforts lies a treasure,  
Thou art the loftiest One,  
Thy extent is known to none,  
And all are strung on Thee  
Like the beads of a rosary,  
Whatever from Thee proceeds  
Is most welcome for our needs,  
To Thee alone Thyself is known,  
Nanak a slave unto Thee alone.

**Sukhmani**



22

God is our guide, from field, from wave,  
From plough, from anvil and from loom,  
We come our country's rights to save  
And speak the tyrant factions' doom  
We raise the watchword 'liberty'  
We will, we will, we will live free,  
God is our guide ! No swords we draw,  
We kindle not war's battle fires,  
By reason, union, justice and Law  
We claim the birth right of our sires,  
We raise the watchword, 'Liberty',  
We will, we will, we will live free.

George Lovelace

Gursharn Singh Bedi

Hukam Singh Road,  
AMRITSAR.

April, 1959.



# **ZAFARNAMA TRANSLATION**

SAFARHAMA TRANSLATION

## INVOCATION TO LORD GOD

1    The Master miracle-worker almighty God  
      Bestower of wealth and peace on mankind,  
      Alone the eternal, merciful, noble Lord  
      By whose grace the mortals freedom<sup>1</sup> find.

2    God alone the refuge of mortal world,  
      God alone the forgiver of sins done,  
      God alone the life and breath of all,  
      God alone the beloved of every one.

3    The king of kings who bliss bestows,  
      The guide true who leadeth every one,  
      The formless Lord, without an equal He,  
      And to compare with whom there's none.

1. *salvation, freedom from the whirling wheel of life and death.*



- 4 None but His will divine may bestow  
One mortal world peace and paradise,  
Earthly wealth, realm, power and pomp  
Avail not; in them no pleasure lies.
- 5 His holy shadow spreads over the world  
Everywhere does shine His light divine,  
He showers His blessings on every one,  
The all-seeing, omnipresent, Lord benign.
- 6 He alone the whole universe supports,  
Showers of His mercy every where fall,  
His favours bless each and every soul,  
And He alone the Saviour true of all.

- 7    God alone the master of every sphere,  
      The loftiest Lord here, above, below,  
      The quint essence of all excellence,  
      And merciful friend of high and low.
- 8    He alone a master of counsels wise,  
      Who stands by the indigent and low,  
      Lends a helping hand to the helpless,  
      And crusheth to death the cursed foe.
- 9    God the Lord who by His law abides,  
      The fount wherefrom all virtues flow,  
      The source of all the books revealed,  
      Who alone the truth entire doth know.

- 10 The Lord of intelligent ways and means,  
Whose wisdom supreme doth alone know  
Truth entire about the vast world play,  
And whose light doth shine 'bove, below.
- 11 God alone the Lord with knowledge true  
Who may end the woes of world strife,  
God alone the Lord with knowledge true  
Who may solve subtle problems of life.
- 12 God alone the Lord with knowledge true  
And designer supreme of vast world play,  
A scholar unique and the loftiest Lord  
Of spheres all wherever do exist they.



ADDRESS TO AURANGZEB ALAMGIR

13 Let Lord God creator of the world,  
Who is One alone, our witness be,  
I believe not any promise or pledge  
That may proceed, O king, from thee.

14 I place not the least bit of trust  
In thy solemn words false and vain,  
All knights and nobles of thy court  
Utter hateful lies again and again.

15 If any one dare repose confidence  
In your oaths on the Book<sup>1</sup> O king,  
He shall soon fall on doleful days  
Which nought but woe and pain bring.

1. *Qoran, the holy book of Islam.*

- 16 And when once the Phoenix bird  
On some one spreads his golden wing,  
The insolent crow can never dare  
Within its reach such soul to bring.
- 17 And when the lion brave and bold  
Doth shelter one from the nasty foe,  
The timid goat. buffalo, dapple deer  
Can never near his sojourn dare go.
- 18 Had I even in secret taken oath  
On the holy Book as didst thou,  
I would never take a single step  
Beyond the mark set by that vow.



- 19 What more forty famished<sup>1</sup> men can do  
 In a bloody combat of hellish hue,  
 When a million armed foes pounce  
 Unawares upon them in moments few.
- 20 The cunning<sup>2</sup> foe made abrupt advance,  
 Pledge or promise they did keep none,  
 And they fell on my men all at once  
 Armed with swords, scimitars and gun<sup>3</sup>.

1. Verses 19 and 20 appear to have somehow been misplaced. They should come after verse 25 and be read with verse 26 to 40 wherein the Guru describes the fury of the battle of Chmakore. Ordinarily 40 men are no match for such a well armed army of numerous religious zealots. But under the guidance of the Master they wrought wonders in the battle field of Chamkore. The defence of the path of Termoplae by a small band of Spartans is not more proudly and gratefully remembered than the gallantry which these 40 famished comrades of the Guru showed in fighting against heavy odds and helping him to escape unhurt.
2. The treacherous Mughal army.
3. Guns.

21 With much reluctance I did yield  
For battle to step into the field,  
And weapons like a bow and arrow  
In that bloody struggle to wield.

22 When all efforts to restore peace  
Prove useless and no words avail,  
Lawful is the flash of steel then  
And right it is the sword to hail.

23 Thou thyself say of what avail  
Were all this bloodshed unto me,  
An outcome of all pledges false  
On the holy Qoran sworn by thee.



24 My men and myself O mughal lord  
Thy foxlike nature did not know,  
Else we would not O cunning king  
In the open plain step out to go.

25 Whoever in his dealings O Alamgir  
On his holy Book doth once swear,  
Must never imprison the innocent  
Nor to shed their blood ever dare.

26 Your men dressed in back costumes  
Swept down like a swarm of flies,  
Atonce they made a reckless attack  
Raising angry shouts and loud cries.

21 With much reluctance I did yield  
For battle to step into the field,  
And weapons like a bow and arrow  
In that bloody struggle to wield.

22 When all efforts to restore peace  
Prove useless and no words avail,  
Lawful is the flash of steel then  
And right it is the sword to hail.

23 Thou thyself say of what avail  
Were all this bloodshed unto me,  
An outcome of all pledges false  
On the holy Qoran sworn by thee.

- 24 My men and myself O mughal lord  
Thy foxlike nature did not know,  
Else we would not O cunning king  
In the open plain step out to go.
- 25 Whoever in his dealings O Alamgir  
On his holy Book doth once swear,  
Must never imprison the innocent  
Nor to shed their blood ever dare.
- 26 Your men dressed in back costumes  
Swept down like a swarm of flies,  
Atonce they made a reckless attack  
Raising angry shouts and loud cries.



- 27 But whoso did take a forward step  
 From amongst enemy lines of steel<sup>1</sup>,  
 The arrows from my heavy-bent bow  
 In a pool of blood made him reel.
- 28 And whoso from that line of steel  
 Dared not in the open plain to go,  
 Tasted not an arrow from that bow  
 Forever to be doomed to worst woe.
- 29 And at last when I saw Nahar Khan<sup>2</sup>  
 Jump into that bloody battle plain,  
 An arrow from my bent bow straight  
 Pinned him down not to rise again.

1. *Line of armed soldiers.*

2. *Nahar Khan was the son of Khawaja Khizar Khan who was incharge of Imperial army in the Chamkore battle field 17 Nov. 1705 A. D.*

- 30 Many Afghans with a boastful tongue  
Took to heels from the battle field,  
Full of fear in their confused minds  
Lest like him their fate be sealed.
- 31 Again another Afghan took his stand  
Mad like the tide of a rushing flood,  
Swift in speed like a shot<sup>1</sup> and arrow  
To shed his opponent's very life blood.
- 32 He attacked my men many a time  
Full of courage, valour and grit,  
Fired with a zeal that made him act  
Like an angry soul in furious fit.

1. Gun shot.

38 Many attacks he did launch on us,  
Himself with multiple wounds he bled,  
In the melee my two sons<sup>1</sup> were lost  
And that Afghan too fell down dead.

34 Alas ! The coward Khawaja Khizar<sup>2</sup>  
Of ill repute and accursed fate  
Dared not come in the battle field  
Like a brave soul and a hero great.

35 Had I spied him in the battlefield  
Where so much innocent blood was shed,  
I would at once have let an arrow go  
From my laden bow to strike him dead.

1. *Princes Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh of blessed memory.*
2. *Khawaja Khizar Khan. The Guru calls him a coward because being incharge of the operations on the enemy side he dared not come in the field within the range of Guru's arrows.*



36 Many wounds were caused on each side,  
Many lives were lost in bitter strife,  
By arrows and shots coarsing so swift  
There was tremendous loss of human life.

37 There were heavy showers of deadly rain  
Of arrows and shots in the battle plain,  
Which like the tulip blossom turned red  
With the blood of heroes dead and slain<sup>1</sup>.

38 The heaps of severed skulls and limbs  
Of warriors killed in the battle there,  
Looked like so many sticks and balls  
Stored for game by the divine Player<sup>2</sup>.

1. *Slain & dead.*

2. *God.*

3     The arrows' whiz<sup>1</sup> and bowstring<sup>2</sup> twang  
       Did fill the air with painful cries,  
       The young and old, men and women all,  
       Did stand aghast in sobs and sighs.

40    The rumble, grumble and bitter words<sup>3</sup>  
       Of hostile horde with arrows and bow<sup>4</sup>  
       Sent a wave of fear in hearts brave,  
       Who lost their senses amid worst woe.

41    An attack by countless hostile horde  
       On the two score souls in my company,  
       Was a poor show in the battle field  
       Of their valiant spirit and bravery.

1. *Sound produced by arrows passing through air at great speed*

2. *Sound produced by straining string of a bow.*

3. *Verses 19, 20, 26 to 40 describe the fury of the battle of Chamkore. The Guru and his 40 companions made thousands reel in blood. The enemy suffered tremendous loss of human life at their hands. Such was the miracle of Sahib Guru Gobind Singh's leadership.*

4. *Bows.*

42 Whoso in the name of God believes  
 And in whose heart doth faith abide,  
 Providence will ever by him stand  
 And light divine his steps ever guide.

43 When at last sun, the light of world,  
 Behind veil of darkness hid his face,  
 And moon, the glorious queen<sup>1</sup> of nights,  
 Went up the sky in her shining grace;

44 Lord God the chastiser of proud arms  
 Rescued me safe from the fanatic foes,  
 No harm was done not a hair was hurt,  
 For grace divine full security bestows.

1. *Some Historians say that it was a pitch dark night when the Guru escaped from Chamkore battle field. This is absolutely wrong. It was a full moon night when the Guru killed two enemy watchmen with his arrows and left the place shouting, "Here goes Pir-a-Hind",—night between 17/18 Nov., 1705 A. D.*



45 We knew not that Aurangzeb Alamgir  
Would his own solemn words gainsay,  
And for vain earthly power and pomp  
His own dear creed and faith betray.

46 We knew not that Aurangzeb Alamgir  
Has no regard for any creed or faith,  
Neither fears he the almighty Lord  
Nor cares for what the Prophet saith,

47 Whoso honours his creed and faith  
And to his religion is utter true,  
Swerveth not from his pledged word  
Nor does he ever deceive like you.

1. *Mohammad the Prophet of Islam.*

- 48 Such a soul I would never trust  
Who devoid of truth and cunning be,  
Though he doth swear many a time  
By his Gospel and the supreme Deity.
- 49 Of solemn swearing by the holy Book  
A hundred times if thou set a store,  
For even a moment I trust thee not,  
Nor on thy pledges depend any more.
- 50 Had thou thyself, O sovereign King,  
Trusted thy oaths on the holy Book,  
Thou would have sure sallied forth  
To fulfill all that thou undertook.

51    Thou art honour bound O mughal lord  
      To stick to thy own words said before,  
      For thou did swear by thy holy Book  
      To keep the truce and fight no more.

52    Had thou O Alamgir been on the scene,  
      We would have unto thee made clear  
      The point in dispute between us both  
      Explaining all in a spirit sincere.

53    Your duty is to arrange every thing  
      According to the words to me addrest,  
      Keep in view thy solemn oaths O King,  
      And abide by them to thy level best.



54 Your oral message and written note<sup>1</sup>  
Have again been here conveyed to me,  
Let us soon devise ways and means  
For an end to this longdrawn agony.

55 O mortal man thyself thou do adorn  
With the bliss of being utter true,  
Stick to the position once taken up,  
Within and without the same be you.

56 We welcome all thy envoy hath said,  
And the parley gesture made by thee.  
Do set your foot on the right path  
With thy heart from malice full free.

*1. Two letters had already been received at Anandpur  
and third was received at Dina, distt Ferozepur.  
The Zafarnama is a reply to the last one.*

57 I here quote thy own words<sup>1</sup> O king  
 Sworn and sent to me long before,  
 Which were by thyself and thy men  
 Betray'd and relied upon no more,

58 "To Kangar<sup>2</sup> town repair please,  
 We shall there welcome you,  
 And avail of this opportunity  
 For a parley between us two.

1. *It so appears that the Guru still had with him one of the letters of Aurangzeb received at Anandpur the contents of which he quotes in verses 58 to 61 which were betrayed and broken by the Emperor as his armies attacked the Guru after he had vacated Anandpur on 15 November, 1705 A D.*
2. *Kangar is a town near Dina, distt Ferozepur. The Barar jats of this ilaqa though loyal to the Emperor were also devotees of the Guru. This is why that place was selected for a parely with the Guru. But afterwards when the Guru and his men vacated the Anandpur fort, the Emperor changed his mind and attacked the Guru near Sirsa Stream.*

59      No danger lurks on the road  
          To this town all journey thro'',  
          Loyal Barars<sup>1</sup> who there dwell  
          Dare not do any harm to you.

60      Accede to my request please  
          In person to confer with me,  
          On arrival in the Kangar town  
          I vouchsafe kindness to thee.

61      There we shall bestow on you  
          The honour of a noble knight  
          With a thousand pick horsemen  
          As thy retinue day and night''.

1. Jats whose subcaste is Barar.



62 O Alamgir I am an humble servant  
Of every one, of all humanity,  
Heart and soul I am ready to come  
To thy court if thou so betoken me.

63 But you must issue a royal Firman<sup>1</sup>  
Ending the war between you and me,  
I shall then visit the royal court  
With my own ideas to acquaint thee.

64 If thou hast faith in God almighty,  
And art indeed His sincere devotee,  
Without delay act on the offer made  
By me above, O Sovereign, unto thee,

1. *A proclamation under personal seal and signature of the Emperor stopping all hostilities against the Khalsa who had revolted against the inhuman and tyrinical Mughal regime tn India.*

- 65 Thou shalt fear the almighty God  
And His will divine thou must obey,  
Cause no pinch or pain to any one  
On false reports or mere hearsay.
- 66 O Aurangzeb 'proud lord of the world'  
Who adareth a monarch's high throne,  
Strange is the justice thou dispense  
And the royal qualities by thee shown.
- 67 How strange is thy justice O Alamgir,  
How strange a defender of faith true,  
A hundered pities for the ignoble show  
Of a Sovereign's part played by you.

68 How strange O king thy royal decree  
That to utter aught but truth is sin,  
When thou thyself have a sinful heart  
And an almost dead conscience within.

69 Soil not your hands with others' blood  
Being forgetful of the wrath divine,  
For soon or late thy blood be shed  
By unfailing sword of Heaven benign.

70 If thou hast faith in God almighty  
Forget thou not for a moment O king,  
"Supple words please Him not a bit  
Nor lipdeep praises His grace bring."



71 The almighty God a King of kings  
Is our Lord supreme, fearless, true,  
His providence extends every where  
In every age and all the worlds too.

72 God our Lord into being did bring  
All the ages long and spheres vast,  
The dwelling place and the dwellers too  
Were all by the selfsame Power cast.

73 God our Lord into being did bring  
The feeble aunt and furious elephants,  
None but He exalteth the humble ones  
And humiliates the reckless cycophants.

- 74 Lord God who is the only Cherisher  
Of the meek and humble, poor and low,  
Loveth no praise and no supple words  
Addressed to Him by the world below.
- 75 God our Lord is the being supreme,  
To compare with whom there is none,  
His light divine shineth everywhere  
Guiding the high and low every one.
- 76 By thy own oaths on the holy Book  
Thou art duty bound, O Mughal king,  
Thy words to honour and this strife  
To some happy ending soon to bring.

77 Do thou honour, O Mughal king,  
The purpose right and wisdom true,  
And to cruel deal with fellow men  
Must, O Mughal lord, now bid adieu.

78 Tho' the voice of my belov'd sons<sup>1</sup>  
Thou hast O king for ever stilled,  
Of what avail is this hateful deed,  
When I<sup>2</sup> breathe alive fury filled.

1. 1. Prince Ajit Singh aged 16 year at Chamkore on 17. 11. 1705 A. D.
2. Prince Jujhar Singh aged 14 years at Chamkore on 17. 11. 1705 A. D.
3. Prince Zorawar Singh aged 9 years at Fatehgarh on 2. 12. 1705 A. D.
4. Prince Fateh Singh aged 7 years at Fatehgarh on 2. 12. 1705 A. D.
2. In the original verse the Guru ironically uses the words (Furious Cobra) for himself after hearing the words of Diwan Sucha Nand (the offspring of a Cobra can be nothing but a Cobra) which he uttered while instigating the Governor of Sirhind to murder the innocent princes Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh of blessed memory.



79 What brave deed hast thou done O king  
 By putting out a few flames of fire,  
 When a blazing<sup>1</sup> fire thou flaarest up  
 To reduce to ashes thy evil desire !

80 How wise the words of Persian muse<sup>2</sup>  
 Whose songs sweet gush from heart true,  
 "Only too soon their doom shall meet  
 The evil doers who evil ways pursue".

1. *The Khalsa spirit which ultimately demolished the edifice of Mughal Empire.*
2. *Litt sweet tongued Firdausi, a famous Persian Poet.*

- 81 The day I gain the royal audience  
Truth shall clear be to thee O king,  
The clouds of untruth will melt away  
And in light divine shine everything.
- 82 If thou still darest shun my words  
And carest not for my message true,  
Then know it for certain O Alamgir,  
That Lord supreme shall forget you.
- 83 If thou hail the advice I here give  
And follow the path as shown by me,  
In Lord God's eyes shalt thou rise  
And thy work recompensed shall be.

8 To know and love the Power supreme  
As better far than earthly days few,  
Is a noble concept, O Mughal king,  
In keeping with the spirit of faith true.

85 We beleive not for a moment O king  
That thou fear God our Lord supreme,  
For many heart rending savage deeds  
Are being done in thy cruel regime.

86 Thy crafty nature is full well know  
To God almighty our heavenly Sire,  
Who will now no longer thee Suffer  
To hold sway over this great Empire.



87 Of solemn swearing on the holy Book  
A hundred times if thou make a show,  
I repose not the least trust in them,  
O Aurangzeb for certain do thou know.

88 I will nev'r visit the royal court<sup>1</sup>,  
Nor will ever take a step that way,  
Ev'n if, O Alamgir, this thy desire be,  
I shall not the royal message obey.

1. *No meeting with the Emperor could be arranged without a proclamation under his personal seal and signature ceasing all hostilities against the Guru as said before in verse 63.*

89 A smiting spirit and fine riding skill,  
 to A handsome from and well trained mind,  
 93 A vast domain and treasure of wealth,  
     A dashing sword and sense much refin'd,  
     A generous soul the indigent to serve<sup>1</sup>,  
     A sharp dagger quick to crush the foe,  
     A clever brain and buxum bright looks,  
     A kind heart on other alms to bestow<sup>2</sup>,  
     A lavish deal and dauntless war zeal,  
     An angelic show<sup>3</sup> with glory flung afar<sup>4</sup>,  
     And firmness of a rock in the warfield,  
     These, O Alamgir, thy proud fortune are !

1. & 2. *Empror Aurangzeb was generous to Muslims alone.*
3. *Emperor Aurangeb's private life was that of a staunch Muslim.*
4. *Litt. In dignity as high as the pleiades star-cluster.*

94 But still, O Aurangzeb, the king of kings<sup>1</sup>,  
Your Majesty is very very far away  
From being true to the Muslim faith  
And the impress of a Sovereign's way.

1. *The Guru would not like to be unjust even to his enemies. He has a word of praise even for the Emperor his bitter foe, but in this stanza the Guru tells him that inspite of all that he was neither a true Muslim nor a good king, as was clear from the evil deeds done by him and in his name by his lieutenants.*



- 95 The wicked hill chiefs and their men  
Conspire my life to end every day,  
For I worship God alone and break  
The stone gods whom they homage pay.

*The Guru here conveys to the Emperor the idea that the Hindu hill chiefs were against him because he was worshiper of God alone and deprecated the worship of stone gods and idols etc. The hill chief on this account attacked the Guru quite a num' er of times but failed in their attempt to over-power him they, therefore, conspired to instigate Emperor Aurangzeb against the Guru and thus brought about a bloody war between him and Mughal forces.*

96 Beware of the ways of this vile world  
Full of treason and of faithless hue,  
It is bent upon harming every being  
And for that all of us doth pursue.

97 On the other hand O Mughal king  
Virtuous ways of the Lord you know,  
Who helpeth one to destory them all  
Though a hundred thousand be the foe.

98 What harm can the accursed enemy do  
When the Lord supreme be kind to you,  
None but He the saviour of every one<sup>1</sup>  
May in His mercy His servants rescue.

1. *The Guru escaped unhurt from the Chamkore battle  
field though surrounded by thousands of bitter foes.*

99 He alone the redeemer of every one,  
He alone the guide of world always,  
He alone enableth the spheres all  
His own ways and virtues to praise.

100 The almighty God our Lord supreme  
Doth render blind the enemy at war,  
And by the grace of His mercy blest  
The humble ones unhurt rescued are.

101 Whoev'r be true to the Lord supreme  
And has fix'd faith in his help benign,  
Him He saveth from decline and death  
Bestowing on him bliss of mercy divine.



102 Whoev'r serveth God with heart true  
And but for Him no master he knows,  
The gift of blissful calm and comfort  
On such a being His mercy bestows.

103 Whoev'r serveth God with heart true  
To the enemy will never fall a prey,  
For every moment the Heavenly light  
Doth guide his actions night and day.

104 Whoev'r serveth God with heart true,  
And fixeth hope in His succor benign,  
If hundred thousand foes fall on him  
He shall saved be by the Hand divine,

105 O mighty Mughal, the king of kings,  
If thou art proud of power and pelf,  
We fix our gaze on the Lord above  
Who is the Creator of all Himself.

106 In the realm and riches of this world  
If thou O Sovereign takest much pride,  
We feel secure in faith unflinching  
In God almighty who doth ever abide.

107 O forget not that this Caravanserai<sup>1</sup>  
Is fleeting, false and passing away,  
It is passing away in every breath  
In every place, every night and day.

108 Beware of the faithless world around  
Full of treacherous and cunning crew,  
None is safe from its spurious deal  
The dwelling place and the dwellers too.

1. *The world where we live for a short time and then pass on just as wayfarers put up in a serai for a short time and then depart.*



109 When with thy cruel hand O Alamgir  
You do torment the humble and low,  
You slash your own oaths one by one  
With thy dagger sharp blow by blow.

110 If the Lord supreme one's friend be  
And on whom His favour He bestows,  
No harm to him can the enemy bring  
Tho' to his utmost hostile he grows.

111 If the Lord supreme one's friend be  
And on whom His favour He bestows,  
None can harm a single hair of his,  
Though a thousand enmities one knows,

*The End*

## APPENDICES

### The Voice of God

God speaks to the high and low,  
Be thou wise His voice to know,  
Serene, sweet, soft, most wise,  
Within the heart its echo lies.





## THE STRAW-BED

After the battle of Chamkore Guru Gobind Singh reached a garden near Machhiwara, district Ludhiana, night between 17/18 Nov, 1705 A. D. Lying on the grass there during wintry cold night he sang a pathetic song in remembrance of the Lord supreme. A rendering of the same in English verse is given below :—

“O dear Friend now know the pathetic plight  
Of Thy devotees in this world day and night,  
Away from Thee in royal mansions to dwell  
Is woeful like life in a dragon's dark cell,  
Without Thee warm blankets sicken the mind  
Wherein no peace in forgetful sleep we find,  
The flask brings nothing but a seething pain  
And by the cup edges like knife we are slain,  
Thy separation, O Love, our fate doth seal  
As under the butcher's noose the animals feel,  
Bereft of Thee, O Love, with others to dwell  
Is nothing short of torture in the blazing hell,  
Yet what a bliss the straw-bed given by you  
In this winter night under the starlit blue,  
When Thy light divine doth shine in my heart  
And as Thou ordainest I here play my own part.”

## SORROW AND GRIEF

In memory of the Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh aged 9 and 7 who made supreme sacrifice at the altar of India's freedom Temple at Sirhind (Fatehgarh) where they were walled up alive on 2 Dec. 1705 A. D. by Wazir Khan the Governor of that area when they refused to accept Islam as their religion and earthly riches as a reward for that :—

Matchless thy sacrifice O sons of Guru Gobind  
To set free from the foreign yoke mother Hind,  
Though in distress deep ov'r the fate you met  
Our hearts are bleeding and our eyes still wet,  
We live to spread your message east and west,  
'To live and die for Truth is indeed living best'.

In the vast waste of this woeful earthly hell  
Some flowers bloom to spread their sweet smell,  
And make bright the fleeting hours of man's life  
Amid the encircling gloom of stress and strife,  
But a thought of buds falling in the sear leaf,  
Fills the mind again with deep sorrow and grief.



## MATA GUJRI JI

Revered mata Gujri was the mother of Sahib Guru Gobind Singh. After the battle on the bank of Sirsa Stream near Anandpur she fell into the hands of Sirhind authorities along with her two grand sons Princes Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh who were walled up alive by the Muslims as already stated. On hearing about this she sat down in a prayerful mood and recited Japji Sahib. Soon after that her soul departed and her mortal frame lay lifeless, 2 Dec., 1705 A. D.

O mother Gujri, lady of the loftiest line,  
 Where thou art, where thy presence divine,  
 Thy sons wrought wonders on this earth  
 And laboured hard for free India's birth,  
 Thou thyself gave away thy precious life  
 In distress deep for India's woe and strife,  
 Blest be thou, O mother, wherever thou be,  
 Thy sons and daughters still remember thee,  
 Thy memory liveth ever-green in our heart,  
 Blest be thou, O mother, wherever thou art !



## THE LIGHT DIVINE

On the Guru's natal morning sayyed Bhikhan Shah a muslim saint living in kohran<sup>1</sup> bowed to the east. To this the Muslims protested as being contrary to the tenets of Islam. The sayyed replied, 'God's light I saw in the east and with heart full of homage I bowed in that direction. There has just born at Patna a spiritual and temporal Prince who will establish truth and destroy evil. I vow to keep a fast till I see him'. After suffering much hunger and fatigue the holy sayyed arrived at Patna<sup>2</sup>. On seeing the infant Prince he bowed to his feet, broke the fast and placed two baskets full of sweets before him. The Prince touched each with one of his tiny little hands while his deep lusturous eyes were fixed on the sayyed with a sunny smile on his lovely lips. People asked the sayyed what did it mean. For a

1. *A village in district Ambala.*
2. *Guru's birth place.*

while the sayyed went into a trance and then coming to himself he spoke thus, "One of these baskets was full of sweets from a Muslim and the other from a Hindu shop. By touching each of them with his sacred hands the Prince has indicated his divine mission to serve all without distinction of colour and creed." The faqir then bowed seven times to the infant guru and departed singing praises of the Lord

### A Martyr be

Bless me, O Shiva, bless me like this,  
 No chance for doing good I may miss,  
 Engaged in battle fear no adversary  
 Being quite sure of my own victory,  
 Soul set on Thee full of longing be  
 Thy glories to sing, adore only Thee,  
 And when my end nears O Almighty,  
 Fall fighting for truth, a martyr be.

Guru Gobind Singh



## THE CHILD BELOVED

Shri Shiv Nath was a holy Brahmin living at Patna. One morning while in deep meditation at the bank of river Ganges he felt as if he was in the presence of the supreme Being. He opened his eyes and saw little Gobind Rai (So was the Guru's name at birth) aged about five years standing before him. In the charming little face he saw the light divine. The serene bright eyes of Gobind Rai conquered the holy Pandit. Perfect peace was his. He embraced Gobind saying, "My Master, Child beloved, all homage to Thee."

With Deg<sup>1</sup> and Tegh,<sup>2</sup> Fateh<sup>3</sup> and Nusrat<sup>4</sup> infinite,  
Gobind Singh was blest by Nanak Lord of Light.

1. Free food for the needy in the same kitchen.
2. Sword to defend truth
3. Victory over the tyrants.
4. Glory temporal and spiritual both.



## THE LORD ON EARTH

Raja Fateh Chand of Patna had no child. One day he and his Rani approached Pandit Shiv Nath with the request that he be pleased to pray to the almighty God to bestow this blessing on them. The Pandit replied, "The Lord is here on earth. I have seen Him with my own eyes. Pray to Him with a fervent heart and your wish will be fulfilled". The Raja and Rani bid adieu to all pleasures of the world and became God intoxicated. Days passed on in deep meditation and remembrance of the supreme Being. Each cell of their body echoed with the praise of Lord God. This touched the heart of the Master. One morning they had just finished their prayer and were thinking as to when they would have the good fortune to look at the face of a son when all of a sudden two little arms went round the neck of the Rani and a heart winning sweet voice echoed in her ears, "Mother dear, here is your son." Their joy knew no bounds. The very sight of Gobind

Rai (Guru Gobind Singh) brought them spiritual solace. They kissed him and bowed to his feet and ever after remained his true devotees till the end of their earthly sojourn.

### The war of Independence

Guru Gobind Singh stately, young and tall  
Was dreaded in the field and loved in hall,  
I tell you that a braver soul good in need  
Against the enemy never spurred his steed.

He raised an invincible army of souls proud  
From amongst the woe-smitten helpless crowd,  
And that great host like lions brave spread  
To liberate Hind from beastly Mughals' dread.

Bandā bairagi with his men like lions fell  
On hamlet and hall where tyrants did dwell,  
They ravaged and sacked every enemy haunt  
And under extreme torture stood adamant.

The edifice of Mughal Empire tumbled down  
By sacrifices of martyrs of great renown,  
And on its ruins an Empire into being came  
Under a benign ruler Ranjit Singh by name.



Nothing Mine

I knew nothing as my own  
All is Lord's, be it known.  
What was Lord's Him I gave,  
Obey His will, O men brave.

I have lost four sons brave  
Many more from ruin to save,  
Mourn not, if they are gone  
Others in peace to live on.

Guru Gobind Singh

The same are the temple and mosque,  
The same are the Pooja and Nimaz,  
All men are the same in spheres vast  
Tho' in different shape and shade cast.

Guru Gobind Singh